

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1489

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL OPORTO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: CHURCH AFFAIRS, LABOR LAW AND CONCORDAT

1. QUOTING VATICAN II ON "FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF THE WORKER TO FREELY CREATE ASSOCIATIONS" AND FROM UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN IN UN CHARTER, PERMANENT COUNCIL OF PORTUGUESE EPISCOPATE MADE PUBLIC ON JAN 18 ITS OPPOSITION TO CONTROVERSIAL LABOR LAW REQUIRING SINGLE NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF UNIONS.

2. IN ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT, MINISTRY OF JUSTICE HAS SENT ATTORNEY GENERAL PINHEIRO FARINHA TO ROME TO START NEGOTIATIONS ON REVISING CONCORDAT. PRESENT CONCORDAT IS MAJOR ISSUE IN PORTUGAL BECAUSE IT DOES NOT PERMIT DIVORCE FOR THOSE MARRIED IN CHURCH CEREMONY.

3. COMMENT: CATHOLIC CHURCH, STILL TAINTED IN MANY MINDS BY ITS ASSOCIATION WITH PRE-APRIL 25 REGIME, HAD BEEN KEEPING LOW POLITICAL PROFILE RECENTLY UNTIL ITS STATEMENT ON HOT POLITICAL ISSUE OF THE LABOR LAW. THE CHURCH'S STATEMENT IS A BOOST FOR THOSE OPPOSED TO THE LAW. THE LEFT

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HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS ABOUT ATTACKING THE CHURCH SO FAR, BUT THIS

MOVE MAY STIMULATE A REACTION.

3. SHOULD GOP SUCCEED IN REVISING SECTION ON DIVORCE IN
CONCORDAT, CATHOLIC CHURCH WILL BENEFIT FROM REMOVAL OF ISSUE
WHICH HAS ALIENATED MANY PORTUGUESE. IT IS LIKELY THAT CHURCH'S
POTENTIAL INFLUENCE IN THE COMING ELECTIONS, ALREADY CONSIDERED
IMPORTANT, WOULD BE ENHANCED BY CHANGE WHICH WOULD ELIMINATE ONE
OF MAIN COMPLAINTS AGAINST CHURCH.
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